



Vereniging het  
Nederlandse  
Luchtverkeersleiders  
Gilde

The Netherlands  
Guild of Air Traffic  
Controllers (VNLG)

## **STATEMENT ON THE CONVICTION OF A SWISS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER**

### **The Netherlands Guild of Air Traffic Controllers (VNLG)**

Schiphol, Netherlands, 14-12-2018

The Netherlands Guild of Air Traffic Controllers (VNLG) is appalled by the judgement of the Zurich High Court in Switzerland this week, where a Swiss air traffic controller was convicted for involvement in an incident with two departing aircraft on intersecting runways on Zurich airport in 2011. The involved air traffic controller actively reported the incident and the following investigation reports had given no grounds for the taking of any disciplinary action against the air traffic controller. Nevertheless, criminal proceedings were initiated.

Aviation safety benefits greatly from an atmosphere of trust in which professionals are encouraged to report and provide essential safety-related information, without fear of being punished for actions, omissions or decisions which are commensurate with their experience and training. This so called "just culture" represents the fundamental balance between aviation safety and the administration of justice, such that lessons can be learned from incidents and accidents, while gross negligence or willful intent are not tolerated.

The Netherlands Guild of Air Traffic Controllers (VNLG) believes that the decision of the Swiss court is contradictory to the principles of just culture and inconsistent with European regulations. It directly endangers incident reporting and weakens aviation safety. VNLG calls upon Swiss legislators to seek for international assistance in adjusting legislation in a way that Just Culture gets implemented for safety critical industries.

As fellow aviation professionals, we sympathize with our colleagues in Switzerland and stand united behind them in this difficult time.

----- Note to editors:-----

The Netherlands Guild of Air Traffic Controllers (VNLG) is the professional association representing more than 95% of the operational staff of Air Traffic Control The Netherlands (LVNL). VNLG actively cooperates on European and international level as proud member of ATCEUC and IFATCA, representing more than 50.000 air traffic controllers in 125 countries.